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"ISRAEL IN EUROPE<sup>1</sup>."

IMPARTIALITY has not kept pace with the progress of the critical spirit in history. Freeman was no more objective than Gibbon. With regard to the history of the Jews, it seemed beyond the range of possibility to have in our day a fair presentation and judgment of the facts. It is therefore with very great satisfaction that we have perused Mr. Abbott's *Israel in Europe*. Every reader must concede that the author has attained a considerable measure of success in his obvious effort to be at once critical and just. Mr. Abbott does not shrink from exposing the dark corners; he has some hard things to say of the Jews. But he also does full justice to the bright side of the picture. He has observed throughout an unusual sense of proportion. *Israel in Europe* describes the vicissitudes neither of angels nor of fiends, but of men.

In an excellent introduction Mr. Abbott deals with the history of the Jewish question in the past and present. He calls attention to the fact that the Jews were settled in Europe much earlier than many nations who arrogate the title of European to themselves whilst denying civic rights to the Jews on the ground of their being aliens and newcomers; that despite their early appearance among Occidentals they refused to assimilate. "A younger race would have yielded to the influence of environment, a weaker race would have succumbed to oppression, a less inflexible or unsympathetic race might have conquered its conquerors." Perhaps slightly too much stress is laid on "race"; probably religion played a greater part than racial qualities. Mr. Abbott couples the Jews with the Phoenicians, but though the characteristics of race would be the same, it was the religion of Israel alone which saved it from sharing the extinction of its Phoenician kinsmen. Throughout, Jewish survival has not been merely an ethnological question. There was something in Judaism which vitalized the race; it was not the racial virility that preserved the religion. It might be truer, perhaps, to say that both alternatives are true, and that race and religion acted and reacted in the mysterious way in which all primary forces work. At all events, Mr. Abbott is undoubtedly right when he sees in the refusal (or should we say inability?) to assimilate, the chief cause of a hatred on the part of the rejected environment, and the course which this ill-feeling pursues is very graphically described. The reaction on the Jews is apparent in their religion. "Jewish history itself shows that the misfortunes which fan bigotry also preserve

<sup>1</sup> *Israel in Europe*, by G. F. ABBOTT. (Pp. 519; London, Macmillan & Co.; price 10s.)

religion. . . . When well treated, the Jews lost much of their aloofness, . . . in calamity . . . the piety of the Jews acquired a degree of fervour which it never possessed in the day of their prosperity. . . . They who possess nothing in the present have the best right to claim a portion of the future." Though this is largely true, it does not follow that prosperity has always led to a weakening of Judaism. Persecution has, no doubt, strengthened devotion, but it has not created it. This is shown by Mr. Abbott in his next seventeen pages, which are taken up with a brilliant account of Hebraism and Hellenism. The author traces the influence on the Jews of the benignant policy pursued by Alexander and the Ptolemies. In another chapter he reminds us that the great conquerors, Alexander, Caesar, and, we add, Napoleon, have usually been well-disposed towards their Jewish subjects. We see that in spite of their prosperity they remained separate from their fellow-citizens, although they cultivated Greek literature with assiduity. The times of the Hasmonaeans and the rise of the Chassidim, and the conflict between Jewish learning and Greek learning are next traced. It is rather a cryptic saying of Mr. Abbott's which represents the Pharisees and Sadducees as "dividing the Jewish nation through the ages down to our own day." There has not been for many centuries any extensive party in Judaism which subscribes to the Sadducean tenets. But it is true that the two spirits—the Pharisaic of a progressive tradition and the Sadducean of a rigid literalism—have divided Judaism, and in this sense Mr. Abbott's generalization is instructive. It is certainly a misjudgment to consider the Sadducees as a reforming party. On the general differences between Judaism and Hellenism Mr. Abbott writes with discrimination and knowledge. The contrasts between the two systems are epigrammatically brought out. "The strength of Hebraism always lay in its power of combination, the weakness of Hellenism in the lack of it. . . . The Jew looked upon the pagan's graven images with abhorrence, and the pagan regarded the Jew's adoration of the invisible as a proof of Atheism. . . . The Greek never grew old . . . and the Jew never was young." We are given a most original account of the influence exercised by the Greek games and the two opposite conceptions of nudity which were held by Jews and Greeks. To consider which of these aspects is the true one, we should examine their bearing upon the morals of the two nations. We must exclude the lofty spirituality of a Socrates, and confine ourselves to the bulk of the people. A noble-minded Athenian could look upon the divine beauty of the human form without experiencing base thoughts, but the opinions of the average citizen were not so strong: this is evident from the plays of Aristophanes. If Euripides depicted men as they are, while

Sophocles showed ideals of what they should be, how much more true is the realism of Aristophanes. The general life of the Athenians seems to have been permeated with sensuality, for which no excuse is apparently required on the stage; laxity of morals is part of the established order of things. On the other hand, among the Jews the morals of the multitude must have been far higher. The ideal is that of the matron who said, "The walls of my room never saw the hairs of my head exposed." The Jews covered the human form with clothes, because man was made in the image of God: it was holy, and all its functions were imbued with high conceptions of morality, which were to subordinate the lower cravings of man's appetite to the superior thoughts of his soul. The Greeks fashioned their gods after their own likeness and conceived them in their own spirit. If ever social conventions were justified, it was in this case. The ordinary mortal cannot attain to the mental height of the philosopher, or to the spirituality of the saint; but failure to reach the one produced sensuality, while, among the Jews, even the Am Haarez lived a sober and moral life.

The next chapter deals with the history and position of the Jews in the Roman Empire. The author traces the rise of Antisemitism and the growth of oppressive measures. Jews and Christians are classed together and share persecution. The Jews of Alexandria also suffer in the increasing outbursts of hatred, and the position of the Jews grows worse everywhere. The history is brought down to the fall of the Temple.

The next chapter is devoted to an investigation of the causes which produced hostility between Judaism and Paganism. The exclusiveness of the Jews is, of course, one of the chief features, but though this quality seems unjust and unethical, yet it was the only means which a despised minority could adopt to secure its survival, and safeguard its own precious ideals against the onslaughts of what it could not but regard as a lower culture. But, naturally, although the pagan could forgive Jewish eccentricity, he could not pardon intolerance. This conception led to mistrust and prejudice, and caused all manner of absurd charges to be brought against the Jews.

The following chapters are occupied with an account of the dispersion and the rise of Christianity, and the history is carried on to the eighth century. We can particularly recommend the chapters on "the Middle Ages" and "the Crusades." The story is remarkably well told and the information exact. The style is exceedingly attractive, and the misfortunes of the Jews are narrated with sympathy. The biographies of Maimonides and Jehuda Halevi are introduced, but we do not feel absolutely at one with Mr. Abbott in stating that

Maimonides belonged to the category of the forced converts to Islam. "The evidence does not justify us in asserting that Maimonides ever did more than act a part of tacit consent<sup>1</sup>." The remainder of the first hundred pages brings the history up to 1400. Such subjects as the Crusades, Usury, the Inquisition, the Reformation, the Renaissance, the Ghetto, and ritual murder charges, are very carefully investigated, and while great originality is displayed in dealing with them, new opinions are based upon a good foundation of historical facts. A very important feature is the stirring account of the battle of Jewish Emancipation. The course of the struggle has been traced to its consummation through all its vicissitudes. Together with this we are given an account of Barabas, Shylock, and other literature of interest for a clear understanding of the status of the Jews, and the opinions held concerning them by dramatists and their audiences. Full stress is laid on the impossibility of a Jessica, this is ignored by many authors, but we entirely share Mr. Abbott's opinion. Had Shakespeare known one single daughter of Israel he would never have committed the mistake of portraying the Jewish maiden in the way he has done. Jessica is, in reality, far worse than Shylock. She is unnatural and base to the lowest degree. She has had every cause to love her father, while Shylock has had every cause to hate Antonio. For him there can be some excuse, or at least some motive, but nothing can be urged for the daughter. Events in Italy, Spain, England, Germany, are all considered, and the book concludes with four excellent essays on Russia, Roumania, Antisemitism, and Zionism.

In the chapter on Russia, Mr. Abbott gives a thorough review of the whole Russian question. There is an account of the policy pursued by each successive Czar and Minister, the attitude of the Church and the causes of antisemitic outbreaks. Then we come to the terrible events of 1882, and the outrageous demands of the peasantry. The unfair remarks of Mr. Goldwin Smith and Madame Novikoff are scrutinized and exposed, and the well-known charges against the Jews are examined and impartially considered. The result of the May Laws and of the Jewish disabilities is treated at great length, and finally we have a graphic account of the recent Pogroms, which establishes the complicity of the Government beyond any doubt. Again we are struck by the thorough way in which the author proves every statement. Hence the chapter will be found especially useful to students of politics as well as to students of literature.

<sup>1</sup> Abrahams and Yellin ; Maimonides, p. 25.

The history of the Aliens Bill is ably described in the chapter on Antisemitism, which is, in a way, perhaps the most suggestive portion of the book. We are here presented with an orderly and precise account of the real germs which have propagated the disease. On the other hand, Mr. Abbott's treatment of Zionism, though admirable for its narrative skill, is not quite marked by the writer's usual insight.

In what precedes we have tried to indicate the scope of this remarkable work. Its mastery of facts, its beauty of style, its freshness and frankness, are qualities which must win for it a permanent place in the literature of the Jewish question. Sympathy when allied to criticism carries a writer far. In Mr. Abbott these two qualities are combined in a quite unusual manner.

HERBERT LOEWE.